

Statement on Welfare Reform

August 8, 1995

Six months ago, I convened a Presidential conference on welfare at the Blair House. Democrats and Republicans from the Congress to the State houses came to Washington to forge a bipartisan agreement on welfare.

At the conference we agreed on the need for child support to be a part of any welfare reform legislation. Now, the bill passed in the House and the legislation in the Senate includes comprehensive child support reform.

Since the conference, we have agreed to drop any inclusion of orphanages in welfare reform. Since the conference, we have agreed to require teen moms to live at home and stay in school as a condition to receiving welfare. Since the conference, we have agreed that all recipients must sign a work contract as a condition upon receiving benefits.

In addition to the progress we have made on a bipartisan basis of what welfare reform legislation must include, I have signed a sweeping Executive order concerning child support collection from delinquent parents. My administration is collecting a record amount of child support, making responsibility a way of life, not an option.

This year alone I have approved a dozen welfare reform experiments. The experiments have included new proposals, among them: requiring people to work for their benefits, requiring teen moms to stay at home and in school, requiring welfare recipients to be held to a time limit, requiring delinquent parents to pay child support, and requiring people on welfare to sign a contract which would hold them accountable to finding a job. The State experiments now total 32 States reaching 7 million individuals.

It is time to put partisanship and politics aside and to get the job done. The American people deserve real welfare reform and have been kept waiting long enough. We need a bipartisan bill that ends welfare and replaces it with work. I hope the Senate will place welfare at the top of its agenda in September and take swift action.

While Congress continues to debate welfare, I will proceed with the far-reaching wel-

fare reforms I initiated with the States over the last 2 years. We will continue to move people from welfare to work. We will continue to require teen moms to stay in school and live at home as a condition of their benefits. I call on this Congress to join me in a bipartisan endeavor, with politics aside and the national interest at the center of our efforts.

Remarks to the Progressive National Baptist Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina

August 9, 1995

Thank you. Mr. President Smith, I'm glad you explained that whole thing because here I was about to speak, I'd let enough time go by between Gardner Taylor and me that you could maybe forget some of my—[*laughter*]*—and then you said, we're going to wait until after he speaks to sing "Oh Happy Day."* [*Laughter*] But I think I understand it.

To all the vice presidents and your convention secretary and Reverend Booth and many of my friends who are here, Reverend Otis Moss, Reverend Charles Adams, Reverend Billy Kyles and Reverend Shepard. To my wonderful friend Reverend Gardner Taylor, thank you for what you said. I intend to tell the story of the hound dog and the hare. [*Laughter*] Where appropriate, I will give you credit. [*Laughter*] To Governor Jim Hunt—ladies and gentlemen, Jim Hunt may be the most popular Governor in America. He's certainly one of the two or three finest Governors in America, and a great friend of mine. We're glad to have him here. In 1979—that was a long time ago—when I had no gray hair and he had much less—[*laughter*]*—he nominated me to be the vice chairman of the Democratic Governors Association. No one knew who I was. I was 33 years old. And if it hadn't been for that, I might not be here today. Now, that may get him in a lot of trouble down here for all I know, but I will always be grateful to Jim Hunt for the role he had in my life and the role he's had in the life of this State and Nation.*

I have looked forward to coming here. I feel at home. Most people down here don't